

WILLIAM TELL OVERTURE

William Tell describes the legend of the Swiss patriot, who supposedly lived in the early 14th century. He refused to bow to the local leader's hat, which had been set on a pole in the middle of town, and for this was given a choice: shoot an apple off his son's head, or he and his son would be executed. Tell's defiance of this leader sparked a rebellion which resulted in the predecessor to the modern Swiss government. **[TEACHERS: SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FOLLOW IN BOLD.]**



The nation of Switzerland, located in central Europe.

Name two other governments begun through rebellions against unjust leaders:

UNITED STATES and SOUTH AFRICA (examples)

How might their countries compare to Switzerland today? You may need to do some research in the library or on the Internet to answer this question.

U.S. IS A CONSTITUTIONAL REPUBLIC BASED ON REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY; SWITZERLAND IS A DIRECT DEMOCRACY. SOUTH AFRICA IS A PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY. (short versions of answers)

What do you know about the 14th century that might explain why a leader could order his subjects to bow to his hat?

[ANSWERS CAN DISCUSS FEUDALISM, LOCAL MONARCHIES, LACK OF DEMOCRACY, ETC.]

Describe another work of art (film, song, opera, etc.) that takes an act of rebellion as its subject.

[some examples: V FOR VENDETTA or STAR WARS (films); LES MISERABLES or EVITA (musical theater); YANKEE DOODLE or THE SOUL CAGES (songs); FINAL FANTASY series (video games)]